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RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0433  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0135  
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RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0431

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DEPARTMENT FOR SNEC SMANN, MOSCOW FOR REFCOORD

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SUBJECT: UN AGENCIES ENCOURAGE AZERBAIJAN TO PLAN FOR IDP  
REPATRIATION

REF: BAKU 603

Classified By: Acting DCM Joan Polaschik for Reasons 1.4 b and d.

1 (C) In a May 17 meeting with Poloff, UNHCR Representative Bill Tall shared the contents of a letter UNHCR transmitted to GOAJ Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov concerning the role of UN agencies in IDP repatriation planning, in the event of a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Tall said that Baku-based UN agencies and the ICRC privately agreed to send this letter to Hasanov, who chairs the State Committee on IDP issues, as a "next step" in UNHCR's effort to move GOAJ IDP repatriation planning forward. Tall plans to meet Hasanov May 20 to encourage the GOAJ to establish its own IDP repatriation coordinating mechanism as a focal point for international aid agencies' interaction with the GOAJ. Tall also told Poloff that Hasanov personally approved of UNHCR's initiative and fully accepts the principle of a voluntary return of IDPs as the basis for planning.

12. (C) UNHCR's letter states that UN agencies are prepared to take on responsibility for post-settlement IDP repatriation activities in their respective sectors of expertise: UNICEF - Water and Sanitation, WFP - food, WHO - health, and ICRC - protection of humanitarian interests of the IDP population. In the letter, UNHCR also highlighted the importance of a comprehensive needs assessment of the war-ravaged occupied territories as the prerequisite to any detailed UN or bilateral assistance plan for an IDP return. Tall also reaffirmed to Poloff that the GOAJ strongly expects USG to play a lead role in implementing and financing a repatriation plan, in conjunction with UN aid agencies and IOM. Separately, Hasanov's senior advisor Gurban Sadiqov told Poloff that Hasanov was supportive of UNHCR's overtures and recognized the need to establish a GOAJ coordinating mechanism to direct the implementation of a post-conflict IDP repatriation plan.

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